What are styles? Why use them?

A style is a set of formats that you can apply to selected elements in a document to quickly change their appearance. Applying a style often means applying a group of formats at the same time.

Many people manually format spreadsheet cells and pages without paying any attention to styles and are accustomed to formatting documents according to physical attributes. For example, for the contents of a cell you might specify the font family, font size, and any character formatting such as bold, italic, or underline.

Using styles means that you stop applying attributes and characteristics individually (for example, *font size 14 pt, Times New Roman, bold, centered*) and start using a style, for example *Title*. Applying attributes and characteristics is time-consuming and prone to errors. In contrast, using a style, which has been defined to include the attributes and characteristics you want, will save you time and give greater consistency in formatting.

Styles also make major formatting changes easy. For example, you may decide to change the appearance of all subtotals in a spreadsheet to be 10 pt Arial instead of 8 pt Times New Roman after you have created a 15-page spreadsheet. Assuming that you have formatted all subtotals with a specific style, you can change all of the subtotals in the document by simply changing the properties of that style.

In addition, Calc also provides page styles, as described below.

You can modify the attributes of the supplied styles and define as many new styles as you require. Creating, modifying, and accessing styles is explained in the following sections.

Direct formatting and Style formatting

Direct formatting (also called *manual formatting*) overrides styles. You cannot remove the direct formatting by applying a style to it.

To remove manual formatting, select the text, and then do one of the following:

- Right-click and choose **Clear Direct Formatting** in the context menu.
- Press *Ctrl+M.*
- Click the **Clear Direct Formatting** icon on the Standard toolbar.
- Select **Format > Clear Direct Formatting** on the Menu bar.

Calc style types

While some components of LibreOffice offer many style types, Calc offers only two: cell styles and page styles. These style types are explained in the following sections.

Cell styles

Cell styles are similar to paragraph styles used in LibreOffice Writer. They are the most basic type of style in Calc. Cell styles are used for applying fonts, alignment, borders, background, number formats (for example, currency, date, number), and cell protection to format the data in the cells.

A basic range of cell styles is supplied with Calc. Many of these styles are shown on the **Styles** menu on the Menu bar and all are shown in the Styles deck of the Sidebar. If you create a new cell style, it will be shown in the Sidebar. To add it to the **Styles** menu, see Chapter 14, Setting up and Customizing, for instructions.

Initially, the basic styles are configured so that if you change the characteristics of the *Default Cell Style* cell style, then all of the other styles, inheriting from it, will change to match.